

## **Habit 5: Seek First to Understand, Then to be Understood Synopsis**

### **Introduction**

- See things from another's point of view before sharing your own.
- "Before I can walk in another's shoes, I must first remove my own" – Unknown
- It is a tendency of people to want to swoop out of the sky like Superman and solve everyone's problems before we even understand what the problem is. We simply don't listen.
- The key to communication and having power and influence with people can be summed up in one sentence: "Seek First to Understand, then to be Understood."
- Listen first, talk second.
- This habit is the key to communication, because the deepest need of the human heart is to be understood.
- Everyone wants to be respected and valued for who they are – a unique, on-of-a-kind, never-to-be-cloned individual.
- People won't share their deepest feelings unless they feel genuine love and understanding.
- Once they feel it, they will probably give you more than you want to hear.
- Try to understand instead of judging.

### **A Short Poem about Listening**

#### **Please Listen**

When I ask you to listen to me  
And you start giving me advice,  
You have not done what I asked.  
When I ask you to listen to me  
And you begin to tell me why  
I shouldn't feel that way,  
You are trampling on my feelings.  
When I ask you to listen to me  
And you feel you have to do something  
To solve my problem,  
You have failed me,  
Strange as that may seem.  
Listen! All I ask is that you listen.  
Don't talk or do – just hear me.

### **Listening**

#### **Five Poor Listening Styles**

- Spacing out – wandering off when someone is speaking to us.
- Pretend listening – we pretend by making comments like yeah, sounds great, etc...
- Selective listening – we pay attention only to the part of the conversation that interests us.
- Word listening – we only pay attention to the words but not the true meaning behind the words.
- Self-centered listening – we listen but see everything from our point of view.
- Judging – Sometimes, as we listen to others, we make judgments (in the back of our minds) about them and what they're saying. If you are judging, you're not really listening. People don't want to be judged, they want to be heard.

## **Genuine Listening**

- Higher form of listening.
- Leads to real communication.
- Listen to not only what is said, but to what is not said.
- Watch body language, tone, and feeling reflected in someone's voice.

## **Steps to Better Listening**

- First, listen with your eyes, heart, and ears. – listening with your ears isn't good enough, because only 7 percent of communication comes from the words we use. The rest comes from body language (53%) and the tone and feeling reflected in our voice (40%). To hear what other people are really saying, you need to listen to what they are not saying.
- Second, stand in their shoes. – You must try to see the world as others see it and feel as they feel.
- Third, practice mirroring. – Reflect. Repeat back to the person what they just said. It is not mimicking. Put it in your own words. This lets the person know you understand what they are saying without judging or giving advice.

## **Mirroring Phrases**

- “So, as I see it....”
- “I can see that you're feeling....”
- “So, what you're saying is ....”

## **Communicating With Parents**

- If you want to improve your relationships with Mom or Dad, try listening to them just like you would a friend.
- Many times teens think parents don't understand them, but have you ever stopped to consider that perhaps you don't understand your parents?
- If you take time to understand your parents, you will gain a greater respect for them and you will get your way much more often.

## **How Can You Better Understand Your Parents**

- Start by asking them some questions
- Make a deposit into the Relationship Bank Account – Put yourself in their shoes and do something for them without being asked.

**\*\*\*\* Synopsis – Verbatim or paraphrased from Sean Covey – *7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens*.**